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[Childcare Stands Between Poverty and Jobs in Nashville](#)

Tuesday, September 23rd, 2008

Service providers say childcare increasingly stands between Nashville parents living in poverty and getting a good job.

Joyce Searcy is president of Bethlehem Centers of Nashville and says the issue has become critical as a single-income family becomes more and more difficult.

“We don’t have enough childcare for all of the people who are choosing to go to work or have to work in non-traditional hours.”

Searcy says childcare is especially hard to find for infants and toddlers, mostly because it’s more expensive to care for them. By the latest census estimates, some 30-thousand families in Nashville are faced with finding childcare because no parent can stay home. Searcy says there aren’t nearly enough spots to meet increased demand.

Paul Haynes directs the Nashville Career Advancement Center and says childcare is often the number one barrier to finding employment.

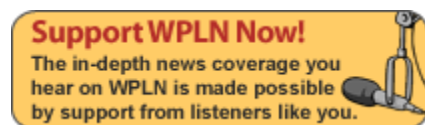
“If we can help them through workforce development, we can help them get a job. But if the childcare facility closes at 6 o’clock, and that employer says you’re going to work until 6:30, what do you do?”

Experts began discussing the childcare issue at Nashville’s Poverty Symposium today.

In data released by the Census Bureau this month, nearly 15-percent of Nashville residents live in poverty. For a single person, that’s less than 11-thousand dollars a year.

By Blake Farmer

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